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SUBJECT Activities of the North Korean 526 Army Unit

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50X1-HUM

Objectives of the 526 Unit

1. Before the Korean war, in the North Korean army there was a Cultural Department (Munhwa Pu) which directed or participated in foreign and domestic political activities, propaganda, and Labor Party organization. Sometime after the beginning of the war, the unit was renamed the Political General Bureau (Chongch'i Ch'ong Kuk), and PAK Hon-yong<sup>1</sup> was made head. By the end of 1951 the bureau had established several schools to give special training and instruction to Labor Party members who had been members of the South Korean Labor Party so that they could reconstruct the influence of the SKLP. Two of these schools were the Seoul Political School in Sinch'ŏn-gun (125-25, 38-18) (YC-1141) and the Kyonggi Province Party School in Kŭmch'ŏn-gun (126-29, 38-13) (BT-8032).<sup>2</sup>
2. The 526 Unit of the Political General Bureau includes a Guerrilla Command Division (Yukyok Chi'hwŭ Ch'ŏ), the principal objectives of which are the

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50X1-HUM

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CONFIDENTIAL

-2-

support of guerrilla and other subversive activity in the ROK. Chief of the Guerrilla Command of the 526 Unit is PAE Ch'ol (裴哲),<sup>3</sup>

3. The 526 Unit in late 1951 was attempting to rebuild the South Korean Labor Party in the ROK in order to effect the wide-scale recruitment of pro-North Korean guerrillas. As part of this plan, the 526 Unit planned to organize a guerrilla force of about 500 men, to be dispatched to South Korea in teams of five to six men each. The teams were to set up safehouses in the ROK and station two liaison officers at each house. Operational funds in the form of ROK won, gold, opium, and other easily convertible items of exchange were furnished the teams. Team captains received 200,000 ROK won<sup>4</sup> and team members were given about 100,000 ROK won each.
4. Headquarters of the North Korean 526 Army Unit in late 1951 was in a suburb of P'yongyang about 12 kilometers northeast of the city. Leader of the Labor Party division of the headquarters was YI Sung-yop,<sup>3</sup> Minister of Justice, and the military commander of the unit was PAE Ch'ol (裴哲),<sup>3</sup> formerly chairman of the North Kyongsang Province Labor Party. The 526 Unit, which was established in January 1951, is attached to North Korean army general headquarters, and is the directing agency for all North Korean guerrilla activities in the ROK. It is responsible for the recruitment, training, and dispatch of guerrillas to the various teams in the ROK. Its missions include the dispatch into the ROK of agents of the Special Operations Unit and of the Political Operations Unit, political agents<sup>5</sup> of the North Korean Labor Party, and agents of the Ministry of Social Security. The principal aim of the headquarters is the rebuilding of Labor Party influence in the ROK. To carry out these tasks, the 526 Army Unit, also known as the Guerrilla Guidance Unit, established two subordinate headquarters, one the Eastern Liaison Office, and the other the Western Liaison Headquarters. 50X1-HUM
5. In late 1951 headquarters of the 526 Army Unit was at Kongji-ri, Sichong-myŏn, Kangdong-gun (possibly 125-59, 39-00, YD-5821). There were about 20 officers at the headquarters. Thirty wireless operators maintained constant contact with the Western and Eastern Liaison Offices of the unit.

#### Western Liaison Office

6. In late 1951 the headquarters of the Western Liaison Office was in Sibyŏn-ni (126-42, 38-18) (BT-9941). 50X1-HUM
7. In November 1951 the Western Liaison Office was at Tusŏk-ni in Sŏch'ŏn-myŏn (126-46, 38-19) (CT-0543), and was commanded by YI Un-yong,<sup>3</sup> aged 30. His deputy was KIM Yong-sik,<sup>3</sup> [redacted]. There were six sections in the office. The Liaison Section, the most important, handled security and communications, and included a Scout Company, which had six scout units deployed along the front lines forward of the headquarters. The Training Section included a Training Sub-Section with five numbered educational units. Other sections were the Defense Section, the Support Section and the Medical Section.
8. The Western Liaison Office in November 1951 was devoting much time to training troops in the command. In the early morning the troops were given two hours of indoctrination on the Korean war and the strengthening of the Labor Party, and the remaining hours of the day were spent in military training. Discipline was very strict in the unit, and even a minor infraction of regulations or inefficiency in such work as sentry duty was the cause for three days of im-

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

-3-

prisonment of the offender. Because of the location and work of the unit, it was not feasible to supply the headquarters by truck, and 20 oxcarts were used daily to transport needed supplies to them.

9. The Western Liaison Office in late 1951 was training recruits for guerrilla units to be infiltrated into the ROK. When instruction was completed, they were being transferred to the Eastern Liaison Office, which was responsible for actually launching the teams across the battle lines. Other agents the Western Liaison Office was training included graduates of the Seoul Political Academy, the Kyonggi Province Party School, and the Seoul Party School. The Western Liaison Office itself usually guided through the lines special agents from various organizations, including the Ministry of Social Security.

#### Eastern Liaison Office

10. The Eastern Liaison Office in late 1951 was at Ponghyŏn-ni (127-57, 38-30) (DT-0861) in Naegwang-myon, and was headed by Hŏ Chŏng-il,<sup>3</sup> aged 40, a graduate of the Kangwon Political Academy. Deputy chief of the office was Yi Ch'ang-hi, aged 60, a native of South Kyongsang Province. The organization of the Eastern Liaison Office was similar to that of the Western Liaison Office, but the Eastern Liaison Office had a large independent Communications Section which was responsible for transmitting orders to the six Guerrilla Branch Units in the ROK and which handled all other communication activities. The Communications Section was composed of a Communications Company, which had under it six Communications Units and a Scout Unit. The Education Section was connected with a military training school, and together they were responsible for training officers for guerrilla units in South Korea; the trainees were organized into five companies. Support, Defense, Organization, and Medical Sections completed the organization of the Eastern Liaison Office. The office also gave special training to students from the Kangwon Province Party School and the Labor Union Academy, dispatching them through the front line units of the office.

50X1-HUM

11. In late July 1951 a fifty-man group from the Korean Labor Party headquarters in P'yongyang, led by SONG Huk and SO Yun, officers from the 4th Guerrilla Unit in the ROK at Chiri-san, left for the Eastern Liaison Office, arriving 30 July. The group consisted of students from the Seoul Political Academy. After their arrival at the Eastern Liaison Office, the students were placed into one of two groups according to their assignments: some were to engage in guerrilla activity and others in espionage.
12. Between July and September 1951 about 400 men were being trained at the Eastern Liaison Office for guerrilla duty with the 5 Guerrilla Branch Unit. In September 1951 this group was transferred to Yangdok (126-38, 39-13) (BU-9643) for more training. From June to September 1951 another group of 400 men was being trained at the Eastern Liaison Office for duty with the 1 Branch Unit and in September this second group was transferred to Ich'on (126-53, 38-30) (CT-1563) for more training. Both groups were to be sent into the ROK at a time when the North Korean army was again on the offensive. In late 1951 the groups were still in North Korea.

#### Guerrilla Branch Units

13. There were six Guerrilla Branch Units<sup>6</sup> under the command of the 526 Army Unit, and in late 1951 a seventh branch unit was being organized. In that year, however, the six Guerrilla Branch Units met with little success in their operations. The 1 Branch Unit, in Kyonggi Province, suffered high casualties in fighting near Yongwŏl early in 1951, and late the same year was being reorganized and retrained in the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

Pongsan (125-50, 38-31) (YC-4767) area. The 2 Branch Unit, in Kangwon Province, and the 3 Branch Unit, in North Kyongsang Province, were able to remain in their areas in some strength but suffered many casualties. The 4 and 6 Branch Units were forced to restrict their movements to the immediate neighborhood of Chirisan in North Cholla Province and Sodae-san and Songni-san in South Ch'unch'ong Province. Meanwhile the 5 Branch Unit was retraining a new group of 650 men in late 1951 at Sinan-ni (possibly 128-28, 38-22, DT-5346).

50X1-HUM

14. About 30 September 1951 the Seventh Branch Guerrilla Unit was organized at Hoe-yang (127-37, 38-42) (CT-8084) with 200 volunteers from the North Korean military forces, most of them natives of Kyonggi Province in the ROK. The commander of the Seventh Branch Unit was KIM Ung-mo [redacted]. The unit had two divisions, one headed by an officer in charge of political operations and the other by a chief of staff who commanded four sections responsible for reconnaissance, support, medical care, and operations. The political division included a propaganda section, an organization section, and a political operations section. Some members of the last were KIM Sok-sam (金錫三),<sup>3</sup> YI Ung-min (李應敏),<sup>3</sup> and YI Tae-song (李大成). KIM Ch'ang-sik (金昌植)<sup>3</sup> was commander of the 2 Platoon of 2 Company in one of the sections under the chief of staff.
15. The aim of the Seventh Branch Unit was to spread confusion and commit sabotage in ROK army rear areas, and its first objective was Odae-san (128-33, 37-47) (DS-6081). The unit passed Kimpil-san in Pokkye-ri (127-16, 38-26) (CT-4955) and arrived at Kimhwa (127-27, 38-17) (CT-6438), where in November 1951 it encountered ROK army troops. The Seventh Branch Unit was forced to split up in this action, but individual groups in late November were still attempting to infiltrate into United Nations rear areas.
16. Lieutenant Colonel KIM Hak-pong, chief of the Communications Section at the 526 Unit headquarters, was interviewing new wireless operators and giving them assignments in mid-1951. Many of these assignments were to the six guerrilla branch units operating in South Korea. Three code officers at headquarters on 29 April 1951 were CHON Se-chin, assigned to the Guerrilla Branch Unit; YUN Sang-chu, assigned to the 2 Guerrilla Branch Unit; and KIM Song-sil, assigned to the 3 Guerrilla Branch Unit. By late 1951 two radios were believed to have been transported through the lines to branch units. In early 1951 SONG To-won, a radio operator, was dispatched with a set of the Soviet "P5P" type to the 3 Branch Unit. SONG maintained contact with the 526 Army unit for 15 days, but after that period no further contact was made. The Eastern Liaison Office learned by courier in November 1951 that the radio had arrived but was in need of repair. A second radio and three operators, CHANG Chun-tan [redacted] YI Chong-pong, [redacted] and CHU Chong-up [redacted] were sent to the 6 Branch Unit in June 1951. The radio has never been on the air, however, and the Eastern Liaison Office feared that it had fallen into the hands of ROK authorities. On 4 December 1951 PAK Kwang-su, a code officer who had been dispatched to the 6 Guerrilla Branch Unit was in Pangdong-ni, Inje-gun (128-22, 38-05) (DT-4415), an area behind the United Nations lines, but friends who saw him did not know whether he was operating in that area, or was en route to the 6 Branch Unit in South Ch'unch'ong Province.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

#### Organization of Special Agent Groups

50X1-HUM

17. Because of the failure of North Korean guerrillas in the ROK to establish an effective and widespread organization, in August 1951 the North Korean government began the formation of small groups of special agents and sent them to South Korea through the facilities of the 526 Army Unit. These groups included the Armed Communication Unit (Machang T'ongsin Tae 武裝通信隊), the Officers Group (Kunkwan Cho 軍官組), the Special Operations Unit (T'uksu Kongchak Tae 特殊工作隊),<sup>7</sup> and the Political Operations Unit (Chongch'i Kongchak Tae 政治工作隊).

CONFIDENTIAL

Armed Communication Unit

18. The Armed Communication Unit sends small groups of four or five men, usually armed with pistols, rifles, and hand grenades, through the lines to transmit orders and instructions from the 526 Army Unit to the Guerrilla Branch Units. The groups are usually dispatched from the Eastern Liaison Office, which is more concerned with the direction of the branch units than is the Western Liaison Office, but may sometimes be dispatched from the Western Liaison Office. Frequently two groups bearing the same instructions will be sent within a short interval to assure that at least some of the members will be able to carry out the mission.

Officers Group

50X1-HUM

19. Small squads of officers from the Officers Group are sent to the ROK to reinforce and direct activities of the Guerrilla Branch Units, and they are usually dispatched through the Eastern Liaison Office. There are about ten persons in each squad, and they are sometimes very heavily (sic) armed with pistols and rifles. The persons so dispatched become members of the branch unit staff and frequently are dispatched at the request of the branch unit, in which case they may be accompanied through the lines by a messenger previously sent to the Eastern Liaison Office to make the request for additional persons.
20. About 20 November 1951 a five-man team called the SIN Yong-sik Unit was scheduled to leave the Eastern Liaison Office for the Guerrilla Branch Unit in the ROK. Four of the men were SIN Yong-sik, leader of the group and a former student at the Central Labor Party School in P'yongyang; YI Yong-man, [ ] SHIM (fnu); and KIM Myong-il, [ ] an agent from the Ministry of Social Security assigned to carry out espionage activity in the Taegu area.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

Political Operations Unit

21. Graduates of the Seoul Political Academy provide the majority of the members for the Political Operations teams, which are composed of from five to ten persons who are sent to the ROK on various political missions, chiefly the rebuilding of the Labor Party in the ROK. The teams are usually trained and briefed at the Western Liaison Office, and they travel without escort to the Eastern Liaison Office, from where they are dispatched through the lines. Each agent carries two or three hand grenades, a suit of civilian clothes, a Seoul citizens identification card for Kyonggi Province or a refugee identification card, and other counterfeited certificates such as a document certifying failure in the ROK army physical examination and an inoculation certificate. Each agent also usually carries from 7,000 to 15,000 ROK won and sufficient rice and rice flour to last seven or eight days. Once across the lines, the agents change into civilian clothing and use their ROK documentation.

Special Operations Unit

22. Teams from the Special Operations Unit are assigned to gather intelligence, commit acts of sabotage, instigate riots, and, in November 1951, were told to be prepared to establish a "second front" in the ROK should the cease-fire negotiations fail and the Communist armies again make a general attack and push southward. These teams include from five to ten men, who may carry two or three hand grenades each. Before leaving, they receive orders which name the destination, and they are instructed to rendezvous at that point in order to establish a base from which they can proceed on their missions.
23. Between 1 August and 10 September 1951 a Special Operations Unit was at Songgŏ-ri (128-13, 38-08) (DT-3120). The unit was composed of 30 members, who were studying

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-6-

map reading. The unit was assigned the mission of infiltrating ROK and other United Nations installations, and crossed the lines into United Nations territory about 15 September 1951.

#### Dispatch of Agent Groups

24. Before the agent groups are dispatched to the ROK, through their scout companies the liaison offices investigate the sections of the front lines which appear to be most open, and the agents are then guided to the point and through the lines by two or three scouts. The scouts accompany the agents until they feel certain the group has successfully infiltrated into United Nations territory, and then return to their units. In late 1951 the eastern front was most often used, but occasionally agents were also being infiltrated through western sectors of the front. Sometimes the following route was used by agent groups who started from the Western Liaison Office for dispatch from the Eastern Liaison Office: Naesan-dong (125-58, 38-38) (YC-5880), Sin'gye (126-32, 38-30) (BT-8564), Ich'ŏn (126-53, 38-30) (CT-1563), Chunyang, to the Eastern Liaison Office at Ponghyŏn-ni (127-57, 38-30) (DT-0861) in Naegumgang-myŏn, from where they were dispatched through the lines in the area. Usual points of infiltration for scouts of the Eastern Liaison Office were Hyangno-bong (128-19, 38-20) (DT-4043) and Kugak-san (國岳山) (127-19, 37-53, CS-5294) and Sŏrak-san (粟岳山) (possibly 127-19, 37-53, CS-5294) and Yongmun-san (127-51, 38-29) (DT-0060) in the central sector.
25. The principal active mission of the Western Liaison Office of the 526 Army Unit was the dispatch of members of the operations sections to the ROK. This was done by three separate patrols of 30 men each from the patrol section. The first patrol moved through the Kaesong area, the second through the small village of Pŏdŭl-gŏl (126-50, 38-21) (CT-1146), and the third through the Yŏnch'ŏn (127-05, 38-06) (CT-3218) area. A typical procedure was that followed by the 1st Patrol, which divided into three squads of 10 men each. The 1st Squad was at Kamak-san (126-58, 37-56) (CT-2100), the 2nd at Chokŏsŏng (126-56, 37-58) (CT-1804), and the 3rd at Majŏn-ni (possibly 127-00, 38-02, CT-2411). These patrols watched for spots in the line which were thinly covered by United Nations forces, and reported to their patrol chief, who forwarded the information to the unit commander. He in turn assigned members of the operations sections, who were to be dispatched to the ROK, to the various patrols for guidance through the lines at the places previously determined by the squad members.
26. In November 1951 some of the men in the 2 Platoon, 2 Company of the Western Liaison Office were the following:

CHO In-sŏng (趙仁成) [redacted] a squad leader. 50X1-HUM

CHŎNG Tu-cho (鄭斗祿) [redacted] in charge of the platoon, a native of the Kyongsang Provinces in the ROK.

KIM Ki-myŏng (金基明) [redacted], a scout, from Kyonggi Province.

O Tae-yŏng (吳大榮), [redacted] a scout, from Kyonggi Province.

PAK Kwan-yŏng (朴寬永) [redacted] from Inch'ŏn, deputy commander of the platoon and in charge of special missions.

SŎN (fnu), a platoon leader, from the Kyongsang Provinces in the ROK.

U Chong-in (禹鍾仁) [redacted] from Seoul, a squad member. 50X1-HUM

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

-7-

1. Comment. In late 1951, PAK Hŏn-yŏng was chief of the Political Bureau of the North Korean army headquarters [redacted] which also describes the organization of the bureau. 50X1-HUM

2. Comment. The existence of these schools and their general objective of political subversion in the ROK have often been noted in available information.

3. Comment. The following is previously reported information on some of the persons mentioned in this report:

HŎ Chŏng-il was chief of the Eastern Division of the Political Liaison Section of the North Korean Special Intelligence Headquarters in P'yŏngyang, according to an FEC statement. The Eastern Liaison Office is probably intended.

KIM Ch'ang-sik. A KIM Ch'ang-sik was an employee of the North Korean State Security Bureau (later the MSS) in 1950, and a KIM Ch'ang-sik graduated from the Hwanghae Province Staff School in October 1948.

KIM Sŏk-sam. A KIM Sŏk-sam was a member of a North Korean espionage ring in Japan in April 1951.

KIM Yong-sik. A KIM Yong-sik was chief organizer for the SKLP in Ch'ahwang-myon in South Kyongsang Province in 1950 [redacted]

PAE Ch'ŏl was a major general and head of the Guerrilla Corps of the North Korean army in early 1951, and was in charge of the Guerrilla Guidance Department and chief of the 526 Unit in late 1951. [redacted] 50X1-HUM

YI Sŭng-yŏp, former leader in the South Korean Labor Party and in charge of guerrilla activity in the ROK since late 1950, was Minister of Justice in 1948, [redacted]

Comment. Radio P'yŏngyang announced on 17 December 1951 that YI Sŭng-yŏp was released from his office as Minister of Justice and was replaced by YI Yŏng.

YI Ung-min was a North Korean guerrilla in North Cholla Province in 1951, [redacted] 50X1-HUM

YI Un-yong was head of the Cultural Department of the Soviet-Korean Association of Wonsan, but went to South Korea on a political mission during the ROK occupation of that city [redacted]

4. Comment. Two hundred thousand ROK won is worth about 25 United States dollars.

5. Comment. It is not clear what difference there is between these political agents of the NKLP and the members of the Political Operations teams. It is possible that the latter are MSS agents. The line of responsibility between the MSS and the Labor Party for the various activities connected with the 526 Unit is not clear, and it is possible that the unit is a joint operation. [redacted]

6. Comment. The organization of North Korean guerrillas in the ROK into six [redacted]

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1-HUM

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-8-

50X1-HUM

branch units has been often reported. For other details of guerrilla activity  
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50X1-HUM

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